لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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Sulh 1354—January 1975

EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

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The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the current of religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor ud-Din as Khalifa-tul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leadership, the Khalifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named, with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquires may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to

(For inland correspondents)
Nazir Islah-o-Irshad,
Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya,
Rabwah, Pakistan.

(For foreign correspondents)
Secretary,
Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions,
Tahrik-i-Jadid, Rabwah, Pakistan.

Printed at the Nusrat Art Press, and published by M. Masud Ahmad B.A. for Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Rabwah, Pakistan.

THREE QUESTIONS

BY A CHRISTIAN

ANSWERED

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An English translation of

ایک عیسائی کے تین سوالوں کا جواب

مصنفہ

حضرت مرزا غلام احمد مسیح موعود علیہ السلام

A Christian, Abdullah James, made three objections against Islam. The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) wrote a reply at the request of the Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore,

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An English translation of the answers to the first two questions was published in the December, 1974, issue of **The Review of Religions.**

The following pages contain translaion of the answer written by the Promised Massiah (peace be on him) to the Third objection raised by Mr. Abdullah James.

The Third objection was :

If Muhammad had really been a prophet, says objection No. 3, he would not have felt so utterly helpless against the criticisms of his contemporaries and would not have said 'Only God knows'; that is, he does not. He knew nothing about the number of the people of the cave (Chapter 18). He would not have said the sun set in a part of murky water (18 : 87). The sun which is 90 million times as large as the earth could not possibly have set in 'a pool of murky water'.

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The Review of Religions

RABWAH, WEST PAKISTAN

Vol. LXX JANUARY 1975—SULH 1354 No. 1

THE OBJECTIONS*

Answer to Question No. 3

Knowledge of the Unseen

The third question raises three objections, which are not three objections so much as three misunderstandings caused by lack of deliberation. To these three misunderstandings we turn one by one:

The answer to the first misunderstanding is that it can never be a distinctive sign of a true prophet that he should be the knower of all secrets even as God is. To be Knower of the unseen, in one's own right or nature, is distinctive of God and God alone. From times immemorial men of knowledge have believed that knowledge of the unseen belongs only to God. To

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Continued from the December, 1974, issue.

other beings such knowledge has ever been denied, their existence as well as their knowledge being dependent upon God. The accepted belief, in short, is that to know the unseen is of the essence and nature of God. It is not in the nature of other beings—liable as they are to pass into non-existence and non-reality—to share this and other attributes of the Exalted Creator. To share with God His Being is impossible. Impossible also is to share with Him any of His attributes. For any of His creatures, therefore, he may be a prophet, a saint, or only a righteous person, it is impossible to be a knower of the unseen. To become aware of some secrets through revelation, however, has always been a privilege of the favoured and chosen ones of God. This privilege remains valid today. Knowledge of secrets through the grace of revelation is possible, but only among the followers of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace), not among any other people. Always and ever, it has been God's practice to choose, from time to time, men whom He favours with a knowledge of some of His secrets. Thus do some men come to have knowledge of the unseen at their appointed times. Such knowledge becomes criterion of their nearness to God. By it they are distinguished from others. Future events, unseen events and secrets are disclosed to them. The knowledge they acquire is such as God chooses to impart. Its acquisition is not in their power or their nature. Knowledge of the unseen comes to them as a gift from God.

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Men who carry out His Will, who become resigned to Him and lose themselves in Him. With such men it is God's practice to hear their supplications and communicate to them a knowledge of past events and future plans. Such knowledge cannot come to them unless God chooses to communicate it to them. Such men are the favoured ones of God. But not God. What understanding they have, they owe to God. What they know, they owe to God. What they proclaim, they owe to God. Nothing to themselves. The Sublime Power invites them by revelation

and they respond. It unveils some of the secrets for them and they become aware of them. It speaks and they hear. Unless God reveals to them, they have no means of knowing them. The lives of prophets—all prophets—provide the proof of this. Take Jesus Christ. How openly does he acknowledge his ignorance. Says he :

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"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father". (Mark 13 : 32)

"I do nothing of myself ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. That is, it is not for me to raise anybody to the height of righteousness." (John 8 : 28)

"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but One that is God". (Mark 10 : 18)

No Prophet has claimed omnipotence or omniscience. The man Jesus is an example. Jesus the Messiah. Worshippers of human creatures think him God. But see how on occassions through his words and deeds he discloses his weak, limited nature. Nothing that he knows, nothing that he can do, does he owe to himself. What a beautiful and unequivocal recognition of the Power of God and of his own insignificance and humanity, do we have in his last utterances ! We read in the Gospels that Jesus apprehending his arrest became depressed and heavy. We read :

"Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death : And he went a little further and fell on his face, (i.e., prostrated) and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : That is thou art the God of Power and I am only a weak and humble being. Not without thee can

I be saved from this disaster".

(Matt. 26 : 38-39)

And his last words were :

"Eli, Eli, Lama sabachtani ? (my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me) ? After which he gave up the ghost". (Matt. 26 : 46)

Prayer of Jesus which went unheard

True, the prayer was not heard. God's will was not to change. Man is weak and powerless against the Divine Will. But meekness and humility proper to human beings could not have had more poignant expression. Jesus went to this extreme of humility in the hope that it might move God to acceptance. Had he been aware beforehand that his prayer was due only to be rejected, he would not have gone on praying untill dawn, He might have saved himself and his disciples this prolonged unavailing agony.

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Jesus did not Know
What Judas was up to

Jesus knew that not he but only God knew what was going to come. The same thing applies to those prophecies of Jesus which did not come true. Not knowing what was hidden from him, Jesus misjudged and misunderstood what had been revealed to him. To cite examples, Jesus had said :

"In regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye (O my twelve disclples) also shall sit upon twelve thrones..." (Matt. 19 : 28)

But it is evident from the New Testament that Judas was deprived of the throne. He heard of this prophecy, yet it was not his lot to attain to the throne.

Now, the question naturally arises : If Jesus had known before-hand that this man was going to apostatise and his future was dark, why did he give him the promise of a seat on the throne ?

Similarly, Jesus saw a tree and walked towards it, so he could eat the fruit. But when he reached it, he found the tree did not have a single fig on it. He became angry and cursed the fiig tree. But nothing happened to the tree. If he had some knowledge of the unseen, he would not have gone up to eat its fruit.

So, on another occasion, a woman happened to touch his shirt, but he did know who. He looked around and asked who had touched his shirt. Had he had some knowledge of the unseen, he would have found out the woman who had done this.

Further Jesus prophesied that men of his generation would not pass away without witnessing all he had promised, his second coming, the falling of stars and so on. But no stars fell on earth, nor did Jesus return to sit in judgement over men. His own century passed, and since then eighteen centuries more have passed and the nineteenth is about to pass, but he has not come.

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Knowledge of the unseen, therefore, was not given to Jesus, and the examples we have given are proof enough. They have been drawn from the New Testament, from its four books.

The other Hebrew prophets are no better. Jacob was a prophet, but he knew nothing of what was happening to his son in the wilderness. Daniel was called upon to interpret Nebuchadnezar's dream, but he knew nothing of what it portended until God revealed its meaning to him.

It follows, therefore, that for a prophet to say that only God knows, not he, is both true and relevant. In it lie his dignity and humanity. It raises him in the eyes of His Merciful Master. It does not take away anything from his status as prophet.

But should anybody wish to know what secrets were revealed to our Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) by God, through God's special grace, I can furnish very cogent proof

that the prophecies of the Holy Prophet—in quantity and quality —are more than a thousand times superior to the prophecies of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments put together. The prophecies of the Holy Prophet are described in the books of Hadith, which books have been compiled with the utmost care. As adequate, effective and inspiring descriptions, they are to be found also in the Holy Quran. And moreover, Muslims do not live by old stories alone, as do followers of other religions. Every 100 years they are able to afford proof of the blessings of Islam. They can point to such blessings even in the current century. They invite all and sundry. So, let them come and see and only then believe. But how many will? The proof is against them. We invite them, they don't come. We ask them to see, they see not. They turn away, they neither see nor hear. They seem afraid lest they find themselves driven to accept the truth.

The second misunderstanding our objector has put forth relates to the number of people in the cave, mentioned in the Holy Quran. The objector asserts that the number is wrong, but does not say why it is wrong and what can be the correct description of the matter and why? If he had done this, we would have taken notice and given an irrefutable answer.

If the objector found anything objectionable in the Quran text he ought to have told us what and why. It does not befit a seeker after truth to raise an objection without giving any reasons.

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His third misunderstanding relates to Quran texts which depict a king's travels to a part of the earth where the sun appeared to him to set in a marshy pool. This symbolic account is taken by this Christian objector as a literal one and objection is then raised how the sun, so many times larger than the earth could drop and disappear in a small marshy pool of the earth!

The objection arises from missing the point about metaphors and metaphorical descriptions. In the New Testament

Testament Jesus is described as the lamb of God. How could that be? A lamb has horns on the head, wool on the skin. It walks on all fours, head downwards. It eats what lambs eat.

The Quranic description should be taken in the same light. I ask the objector to tell me from what source he came to know that the Holy Quran asserts that the sun actually hid itself in the marshy pool. The Holy Quran, narrating what some one perceived and thought, only says that to the traveller the sun *appeared* to hide itself in the marshy pool. It only narrates what the traveller saw. To the traveller the sun *appeared* to set, not behind a hill or a habitation or behind trees as often happens, but into a marshy pool. What it says is that there were no habitations around, no trees, no hills, as far as the eyes could see. There was only a pool into which the sun *seemed* to set.

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Look at the context carefully. There is no description here of any physical fact. A traveller is depicted travelling far and wide. The purpose of the description is to impress upon the reader that the traveller reached a complete wilderness. This is not a description of astronomy or geography. To think so would be completely senseless. Every- day speech is full of such descriptions. We could say "Overnight the sky became clear and cloudless, the stars became visible as sparkling dots studded in the sky". Would it be fair to find fault with such a description, and ask, 'Are stars no more than points?' Would it be right to make this an issue of astronomical or geographical fact?

Only those completely illiterate or ignorant would do such a thing. The context is the key to the meaning. The speaker in the context is not concerned with objective truth. He is concerned with some kind of truth and to describe it he is using metaphors used by all and sundry in everyday speech.

Metaphors and similitudes in common speech

Ye Christian! you eat in holy communion the flesh of

Christ and you drink his blood, don't you really know what metaphors and similitudes mean in common speech? Every people in every part of the world in their everyday speech use hundreds of metaphors and symbols. The speech of God makes use of the same metaphors and symbols, the same which are in use among plain folks. The speech of God does not make use of philosophical terminology. This, because the speech of God is addressed to everyone, to all kinds of people. It is important that it should be couched in language they speak and understand, that it should make use of their idiom, their imagery. Description of truths and fine truths is of course essential. But for him who will communicate with ordinary human beings, to drop the use of metaphors and pictures would not be right at all. How will he communicate? How will he move people to believe, to act?

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No wonder, there is no revealed book which abjures the use of metaphors and parables. Or, which think it right to do so. Has any such revealed book come down to the earth?

Our own speech is full of metaphors, hundreds of them. We find no fault with one another then. "The first moon is fine as a hair", "the stars are dots in heaven," Moon hides behind a cloud", "The sun has risen no higher than a pole" this we say. Or we speak of eating a plate of *Pulao*, drinking a glass of *Sherbet*. Who will think that when we use such phrases we make mistakes of fact? Who will ask, "Can moon of the first night be as thin? Are the stars no more than dots? Is the moon small enough to hide behind a cloud?" The *sun* which accounts for millions of miles a day, can we say, has risen no higher than a pole until midday? When some one says he has eaten a plate of *Pulao*, has he eaten the plate along with the *Pulao*? When he says he has drunk a glass of *Sherbet* has he swallowed the glass along with the *Sherbat*? No, no. We know very well it is the *Pulao* in the plate, the *sherbet* in the glass, that is really meant. So much is clear

enough, clear to everyone. Sensible critics will find no fault with it. We have heard fair-minded Christians say that objections of this kind are raised by the very ignorant or the highly prejudiced amongst them.

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It is not the way of truth, therefore, to treat metaphorical descriptions as though they were descriptions of literal, physical facts. If this sort of thing were permitted, no revealed book would escape criticism. Our daily experiences are relevant here. Sailing in the sea and viewing things from a boat or a steamship, do we not observe the sun rise out of water and set into water? Our descriptions are true to experience. We speak of the 'rising' sun and the 'setting' sun. This everyday speech goes on comfortably and raises no questions of what is valid and what is not vaild in astronomical science. Or of what really happens at the time of sunrise or sunset. It would be pedantic to raise such questions.

Christan objectors who find fault with the Holy Quran forget all about passages in the New Testament which are open to serious objections on this very score. For example, in Matthew (24 : 29) and Mark (13 : 24-25) we are told that at the time of the second coming of Christ for the judgement of men, "the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven".

These things taken literally would raise difficulties in astronomical knowledge. Could stars fall from the havens and become lodged in parts of the earth, nothing happening to people inhabiting the earth, all surviving the calamity? The falling of a single star is enough to destroy the earth and all its inhabitants. Who and how shall they see the son of man come in the clouds when everything on earth is destroyed, and when mankind will lie buried beneath the weight of falling stars? And will the earth survive as a planet while its existence and its motion in space depends on the attraction of the heavenly bodies? And who shall be the elect whom Christ shall gather

together (Mark, 13-27) from the uttermost parts of the earth—to warn and reprove? The falling of stars mean universal destruction and death. An unheard of catastrophe.

Are not these things against everything taught in astronomy?

Take the description of the Magians from the East who were directed to the child Christ by a star:

> "And, lo the star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was". (Matt. 2 : 9)

What star was this which moved in step with the Magians? What law of nature will explain this peculiar movement? How will this description in Matthew fare under the scrutiny of modern astronomy? It has been said this is not to be attributed to Jesus, but only to Matthew. That is to say, it is no part of the revealed Gospel. Which only disproves the reveald character of the New Testament.

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Even assuming this to be a description by Matthew or some one else and not by Jesus, do we not have similar descriptions by Jesus himself and believed to be revealed descriptions? One we we have cited and criticised just now, viz., the son of man coming from the clouds etc. Is this, which is to be attributed to Jesus, good astronomy?

If—and this is important—the gospels contain human and Divine speech side by side, why keep saying the gospels and everything they contain are revealed? why not declare clearly that except for what little came from the mouth of Jesus, the Gospels are only human speech, statements by the writers of the New Testament? And statements the source of which is the writers' own judgement, intellect, and understending, are liable to error. It seems Christian authors are coming round to this view. It has been admitted on all hands that all the miracles mentioned in the Gospels as historical fact are not revealed. Instead, it is what the writers of the Gospels surmised or received from others. Preachers of the Gospels are well aware of these

difficulties. They manage to get over them by admissions of this kind. About nine-tenth of every book of the New Testament is now admitted to be human, only one-tenth Divine. Such admissions are dangerous from the Christian point of view. The miracles of of Jesus seem no longer so true. There is at least no sure proof that they are. Writers of the New Testment give their own accounts of the miracles of Jesus and Jesus gives his own; and the latter which is so different from and so contradictory to the former is supposed to be revealed. This account—account by Jesus which is considered revealed—amounts to a dismissal of miracles, a refusal to show miracles. Those who demand miracles are told they will have not miracles shown to them. We read that Herod asked Jesus for a miracle and Jesus refused (Luke 23 : 8-10).

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Other asked for signs and asked him questions about signs. But Jesus did not answer and showed no sign. (Mark 8 : 11-1). He prayed a whole night for a sign that he should remain secure from the cruel designs of the Jews, but even this sign was not granted to him. His prayer went unheard. After he had been put on the cross, the Jews were ready to declare their faith in him, if only he would come down alive from the cross. But he did not. All this clearly shows that so for as the revealed texts of the Gospel are concerned, they do not claim any miracle for Jesus. When such claims are made, they are based on texts with more than one meaning, which can be understood to mean more than one thing ; so they can be interpreted in different ways. Their meaning need not be their surface meaning. These texts, therefore, need not be treated as texts in support of miracles reported by the writers of the New Testament. There is no statement by Jesus himself which could be taken as proof that miracles had actually been shown. On the contrary, we have clear and emphatic denials by Jesus that any miracles had ever been shown by him.*

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*The Holy Quran confirms the miracles only of the Messiah who

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It is amazing why Christians do not rely on statements by Jesus himself, revealed statements according to them. They rely more—much more than is justified—on statements which according to Christians themselves are not revealed, having found their way into the Gospels in course of time. They do not pretend to be revealed and they contradict statements said to have been revealed. It is simple enough that when unrevealed statements conflict with revealed statements, it is best to drop the unrevealed statements as exaggerations by writers of the New Testament. Exaggerations by these writers are in abundance. For proof you have only to read the last verse of St. John (21 : 25) which concludes the Gospel :

> "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written".

Could exaggeration go further ? The earth could contain all the things written about heavens and the earth but not things about the two or three years of the life of Jesus ! Who will give credence to such fulsome exaggerations ?

Hindu wrote in the same style. They also produced elaborate false accounts of the miracles of their avatars. And Hindus suffered from the consequences of such fabrications. They came to worship mere human beings, Rama and Krishna, as gods. Books containing such fabrications may seem very impressive on the outside but there is nothing inside them. They are like tombs painted white and bright outside, but with nothing inside. Those who come hundreds of years later, what will they know what these old books contain ? They have been handed down

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laid no claim to Divinity. Messiahs there have been many. Also confirmation by the Quran is capable of more than one interpretation. This cannot be used as confirmation of the NT writers.

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to them as pure texts. Divine writings, as if dropped straight from heaven in the same shape and form. They know not how these books were compiled. Men with sharp penetrating eyes, who can spot the truth and isolate it from falsehood and fabrication are few. But men who yield to the magic of falsehood are many, too many. That is why there is such widespread spiritual decline in the world ; and why this threatens to persist. There is no disposition to sift true from false evidence and no thought of how important it is to do so. No effort to guard against this natural and universal human tendency to distort and debase. Far from it. Rather a readiness to fall a pray to Satanic designs to mislead people. Advocates of falsehood have played on the credulity of people and deprived them of true and holy faith. As the alchemist promises to turn base metal into gold, they have made large promises. Promises of spurious spirituality, of benefits and blessings without foundation in fact. At last they have managed to turn their victims into moral perverts ; mischievous, mean, world-minded, pleasure-loving. It is worth remembering that on the subject of miracles shown by The Holy Prophet, and prophecies made by him (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), evidence of a single verse of the Holy Quran is a thousand times better and more convincing than that of all the books of New Testament on the subject of miracles and prophecies of Jesus. And why ? Because Christian writers themselves admit that NT texts are a composition by the disciples. And more, what they write is not about what they witnessed with their own eyes. Nor is it supported by any chain of narrators, nor by the personal experience of the writers. The miracles of the Holy Prophet, on the other hand, recorded in the Holy Quran, are evidenced by the Holy and Truthful God Himself. One such verse would have been enough. But, thank God, evidences of miracles are to be found throughout the Holy Book. Think of the difforence. On the one hand, you have miracles witnessed by the Holy God himself, above all suspicion, all doubt. On the other, you have false, exaggerated, evidences of persons who were not eye-witnesses.

As the Persian poet has said,

"For the wise and the circumspect, a streamlet of silver is better than a hundred mounds of earth".

Fabrication of evidence there has always been. There is nothing to wonder at in this. Christian writers themselves admit their spiritual ancestors invented descriptions of miracles and strange things shown by holy men. They then put them up as revealed writings and asked people to take them as such*.

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*It is a difficult question when these fabricated and exaggerated accounts of the miracles of Jesus got mixed up with the Gospels. That they were fabricated and added by the writers of the Gospels themselves is freely admitted by Christions. According to this humble writer these fabrications were entered, not at once, but in layers, one upon another. Not early writers only but also tnose who came later, played their part. Some apocalyptic writings were completed early. These were plain inventions by Jews and Christians and these passed as revealed. That is why we have so many books of the Gospels. Christians themselves state that many gospels were fabricated after Jesus' death ! One such gospel is the gospel of Barnabas that is according to Christians. The point, however, is that there are serious contradictions between these books and the four books of the NT. So much so that the Book of Barnabas denies the curicifixion and denies the Trinity and the Divinity and Sonship of Christ ; nay, it clearly prophesies the coming of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Because of these contredictions how can we concede the Christian claim that the Books of the NT which they have authenticated are reliable but Books which c o n t r a d i c t these Books are spurious. Invention and fabrication of Books has been going on a large scale. Some masters of the art wrote complete books and circulated them for general use by the people. There were protests but they did not care. Alteration and fabrication within accepted texts was nothing in comparison. Let us remember

Now therefore, when Christians and Jews are known to have indulged in this business of fabrication of religious documents from the earliest times, no reason why we should treat Matthew, etc., as untempered and intact. Their internal discrepencies are patent, as patent as the discrepancies in the books of the moneylenders addicted to cooking their accounts. Such discrepancies cannot hide whatever you may do. It is so with the first four books of the New Testament. No wonder, Western scholars in Europe and America are full of doubts and misgivings. Could they think a mere man—with a body with all limitations, and subject to decay—as God? No, no. They would rather go without any God. A learned friend of mine writes to me now and then from America. He tells me plainly that all the wise men in these parts refuse to think the Christian doctrine unassailable. They are ready instead to accept the Muslim doctrine. True, they only have the distorted translations of the Holy Quran made by Christian and published by them in countries of the West. Yet the light of God contained in the Holy Book manages to reach and illumine their udbiased minds. People in the West have begun to think and think seriously. The false teachings of the New Testament have

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the NT books were admittedly not composed in the time of Jesus, but, say, about 60-70 years after his death. This distance in time involves NT books in further doubt. We cannot say whether the disciples who are supposed to have written these books lived for as long, or retained the physical and mental powers necessary for the purpose. In short, we assure our readers that Christians have no clear proof that twelve books of the NT are spurious, and the four which pass on as authentic, are free from fabrication and interpolation. And they seem to admit that even these four are not revealed, not in toto. Whether they admit or not the books of the NT must make doubtful reading. And this, because Christians have yet to tell us why the books they reject are spurious but not the books they accept.

unsettled them. Some of them have begun to say there is no such person called Jesus Christ who ever lived in flesh as generally believed. Descriptions of the New Testament are taken by them metaphorically. Jesus or Christ means the sun, the twelve disciples the twelve consteallations of stars and so on. The emptinesss of Christian doctrine has become more evident from the fact that not one of the signs of true believers mentioned by Jesus, is to be found among present-day Christians.

Signs of true Believers According to Jesus

Present-day Christians can no longer show the signs which Jesus said were the signs of true believers. Not one.

Jesus said :

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'If you follow me, you will be heir to every kind of spiritual power, every kind of Divine acceptance that I enjoy. You will be like unto me. You will be given the power to show miracles and signs of Divine favours. Your belief will be proved by your power to show signs, signs of many different kinds. What you wish and say, that will be. Nothing will be impossible for you.*

But of the promised blessings Christians today can show nothing. They know nothing of the One God Who hears the prayers of His favoured servants, Who answers back to them face to face as it were, out of His abundant love and mercy, Who shows wonderful deeds for their sake. But true Muslims, heirs to their own spiritual ancestors of long ago, know this One God. They witness His signs of Mercy. They can claim distinction over their opponents, as light over darkness. We have repeatedly said that this claim is fully supported by evidence.

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* Jesus made these clear promises (See John. 14, 12-13 ; Luke, 17 : 6 ; Mark, 16 ; 16-17 ; Matthew 21 : 21-23 and 17 ; 19-20). (Editor)

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Earthly and Heavenly Criteria of true and False Religion

True religion can be distinguished from false, partly by earthly and partly by heavenly criteria. Earthly criteria mean criteria which conform to man's reason, conscience, and laws of nature. Measured by these criteria, Islam turns out to be a religion fitting beautifully into human nature and involving no strain on our understanding. Its ordiances do not appear to be strange or remote. There is nothing in them we feel being forced into accepting. As God Himself says in several places in the Holy Quran, the Holy Quran reminds us of the facts and realities of nature and unlocks its secrets for us. It never invites us to accept anything contrary to the r[e]gularities of nature. It rather unveils nature's subtle truths and regularities.

On the other hand, Christian teaching attributed to the New Testament presents a strange and novel God. On his suicidal death is said to depend man's salvation from sin and punishment, on his suffering, man's happiness, and on his humiliation, man's honour. A god who needed no body and was free from bodily weaknesses up to a time, but who later, owing to some unknown misfortune, became imprisoned in body and physical space. His soul found it necessary to clothe him in flesh, blood, and bones. Physical embodiment becoming permanent, involved him in all sorts of trials and travails which eventually caused his death. But after death he became alive and embodied again: and this embodiment was to last for ever. Can any normal mind accept this kind of belief? Can human conscience support it? Can law of nature subject the Perfect, Faultless, Immutable God to changes and catastrophes of this kind, and make it necessary for Him, to create a world and then to suffer death for its salvation? Create and save by repeated suicide? Can He not show any of His beneficence or do any good to His creatures Here or Hereafter without committing suicide? It is clear enough that if the Mercy of God cannot come except through His suicide, God has to die again and again, and must have

died many a time before. Consequently, such a God must lose all distinctive Divine attributes like the "Permeshwar" of the Hindus. Now think, can a being one as helpless and powerless, be God? One, who can never do any good to His creatures except through suicide? This is abject weakness and helplessness, impossible to think of in connection with the Omnipotent God.

Then, again, we find that the death of the God of Christians produced no good result. The God lost his life, but the Devil and his activities sustained no loss whatever. The same Devil with all his disciples continues to flourish as before. The old evils, theft, robbery, sexual sin, murder, lying, drinking,*

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*According to recent newspaper reports, Britian alone spends 136 million pounds on wine-pressing and wine-drinking. One correspondent writes :

Drunkeness results in hundreds of deaths by suicide. In London about ten thousand out of three million of its inhabitants may be said to to do without drink, the rest indulge in it without let or hindrance, and they include men as well as women. No formal or informal meetings —of societies or friends—take place without brandy or sherry or red wine being served. Main feature of every social gathering is drink. More ; In London great priests and preachers whose profes-is religion are top-class drinkers. Wherever I have gone to such gatherings with my friends Nicholette (writes this correspondent). I have invariably seen three or four young priests drink. In London society nobody thinks drink evil. This correspondent has himself seen many people in the market, dead drunk, bottle in hand, also unsteady women under the effects of beer and many decent folks lying unconscious in drains.

gambling, worldliness, unblief, irreligion, polytheism, atheism, and many other forms of misbelief and misconduct cantinue to be in full swing, even as they were before the crucifixion of Jesus. In fact, they are on the increase. When the God of Christians was alive, Christian morals were in some shape. But soon after his death—the death which is said to atone for the sins of all

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Cases of suicide due to drinking assume the proportions of an epidemic (Rahbar-i-Hind, Lahore Feb. 1, 1883).

Another correspondent report that every year adultery is also on the increase. About 70.000 children are accounted every year as illegitimate. Indecencies are committed in public such as cannot be described. Atheism prevails among the highly cultured and educated. About nine out of every ten do not care for religious restrictions and have no belief in God and the Hereafter. Religious practices are out of question. Atheism on the increase and the fact tolerated. There are confirmed atheists who now sit in Parliament and it is not considered undesirable. Kissing of young women by other than their husbands or near relatives is not only legitimate but is commendable in modern European civilization. No one can aver that there is in England any woman who has not been kissed in her youth by some young man not her husband or near relative. Worldliness there is so much that one of my correspondents Alexander Rusell Webb, writes that among the cultured and educated, he does not seem to have met any one with any thought of the Hereafter ; all being engrossed in worldly pursuits. (*Continued on page next page*)

Christians—a strange decline seems to have set in Christian morals. Satanic influences dominate the scene. All kinds of sins and transgressions, and coarse selfishnesses, have been let loose, Christians themselves admit this. The Rev. Pfender, author of *Mizanul-Haq* has written that it was the decline of moral life—the abundance of sin and transgressions of various kinds—among the Christians which made for the advent of Muhammad (on whom be peace)! A punishment and a warning for Christians! It follows that the floodgates of sin and transgression among the Christians were opened after the Crucifixion. The death of Christ resulted in no reduction of sin. It was not the case that before the crucifixion people were given more to drinking, adultery, or worldliness, and that after the crucifixion they became completely different. It goes without saying that the

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The question is, what has crucifixion of Jesus achieved? Where are the spiritual benefits on which Christian preachers are so eloquent when they come to India? Pure fraud played on the gullible! Belief in the atonement of sins by the death of Jesus has resulted only in the abundance of drink, adultery and lustful approaches. Gambling has increased to the extreme. Honest worship of God and God-mindedness have disappeared. Organized civic life there is. Crimes against society—theft, murder, rape—have been denounced under the pressure of civic necessity. But this check in crimes is not due to belief in atonement but to fear of penalties prescribed by law and society. If the social checks did not exist we do not know what would things have come to. But inspite of the checks social crimes are there. They have not disappeared. They flourish in the West as in other parts of the world.

coarser evils—drink, excess of worldliness,, adultery are in full swing today in Europe. They did not exist thus before the Crucifixion. Not even a fraction of the present sins and transgressions can be proved to have existed in the time of Jesus. Besides the study of the Gospels makes it quite clear that Jesus did not at all want to be arrested by the Jews, beaten by them and crucified. Had he done so, he would not have prayed all night for deliverance from it. He would not have wept and cried.

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> "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me". (Matt. 26 : 39).

The fact is that Jesus was arrested and put on the Cross against his will. At the last moment on it he cried :

> "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani? That is to say, my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me"? (Matt. 27 : 46)

It shows clearly that Jesus wanted to live for some time more. His soul was restless and pining for survival. But all this against his will. The ordinary Christian version of the event is different. It presents Jesus as though he was anxious to die. But of what avail was such death for him and his followers? Had he lived, he would have effected great reforms among them and would have removed many great ills. But his death achieved nothing. His untimely death gave rise to problems of many kind, to mischief which resulted in the spiritual ruin of a people. The brave, no doubt, lay down their lives for the sake of their nation or face death to save others, but not in the senseless way Jesus is said to have done. A wise man would face death or sacrifice life for his people ; but in ways, rational, desirable, beautiful, beneficial and productive of good results. It may entail suffering, even death, for him, but it has to be one that really saves his people from misfortunes. A wise man will not walk to the guillotine or take some poison or jump into a well and commit suicide, and think that this suicide will bring some benefit to his people. Such a thing is

appropriate to mad men, not to men in their senses or men of religion. A reckless death of this kind is forbidden and evil. Only those who are ignorant or idiotic will court such death. A perfect man, a man of sound will and resolution, does no good to his people by volunteering to die, unless death is a rational choice, dictated by a people's interest. Unless it is so dictated, death of a really good man is only a tragedy, a misfortune. A good man who serves God's creatures in different ways becomes a sinner in the eyes of God, if he decides on suicidal death. His sin is much greater than sin of others choosing to commit suicide. Perfect men, therefore, are under an obligation to pray for a long life, so that, they may be able to serve mankind long and well and in ways for which God has created an urge in their minds. Of course, the death of a mischievous person is better for himself and for mankind. His account of mischiefs will not increase and mankind will not suffer any more for his mischief.

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The Readiest to Die

If the question is, who among prophets has been the readiest to endanger and sacrifice his life for his people and for the glory of God, in appropriate ways and on appropriate occasions—is it Jesus or some other prophet or our chief and master, the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace), I must say I know the answer. I also know the irrefutable arguments, the clear signs, the historical proofs on the point. But the answer will be a long one, too long for the present short study; which therefore, I must regretfully omit here. God willing, some time later, I may write a separate essay on this important subject.

But let me declare, at once, that the perfect man who so readily sacrificed himself for his people and for mankind is no other than our Holy Prophet, our Chief and Master, the one and the unique Ahmad, the Elect, and Muhammad the Chosen, the Messenger, the Prophet, the illiterate Arab and Quraishite, on whom be peace and the blessings of God.

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Heavenly Criteria

I have explained, more or less, how true and false religions are to be distinguished from one another, with the help of our reason and conscience. These are what I call earthly criteria of religion. There are heavenly criteria also and they also are important : so important that without their help the difference between truth and falsehood does not become quite clear. For instance, those who follow a true religion truly come to enjoy special contact with God. They reflect the spiritual powers and the blessings of their Prophet.

True followers are like grand-children of God. They grow under the paternal influence of their prophets and come to enjoy the affection and grace which their prophets received from God. Prophets are granted signs. So are the followers of prophets, for increase of divine knowledge. Thus followers become living signs of the truth of the faith which their prophets taught them. God comes to their help. He hears their prayers and often grants them, and informs them of their acceptance before-hand. They have their troubles and tribulations, but these are not meant to destroy them but only that they may become occasions of special signs, signs of Divine powers in their support. They are humiliated but soon humilitation gives place to honour. They have new life given to them after they have been taken for dead. God's wondrous works are shown through them.

Acceptance of Prayer, as Trial and As Reward

It should be remembered that acceptance of prayer is of two kinds. Acceptance is sometimes a trial for him who prays, sometimes a reward or a grace. By way of trial, sometimes sinners, transgressors, and unbelievers too have their prayers, accepted. Acceptance by way of trial is not true acceptance—it is only a trial, or a test. Acceptance of prayer as reward or grace, however, is granted only to those chosen ones of God who reveal signs and symptoms of being the elect of God. Such acceptance

is never granted to transgressors. It is granted only to those who are righteous, in the sight of God, and who obey His Commandments. The difference between the two kinds of acceptance—acceptance as trial and acceptance as reward—is that for the former it is not indispensable that the supplicator should be righteous and a favourite of God. Nor is it necessary that acceptance of his prayer should be communicated to him Nor is the object of prayer so high and mighty that the acceptance thereof should seem to be a marvel and a miracle.

Prayers of the Elect

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Acceptance to be accounted as a reward by God is distinguished by the following signs:

1. It proceeds from the heart of a God-fearing, truthful, perfect person;
2. Its acceptance is communicated to him beforehand by divine word or vision.
3. Most such prayers pertain to things most difficult and complicated, so that their acceptance, when it comes, strikes every one as a manifestation of Divine Power, allowed by God for His favoured ones and not a human performance accomplished by human methods.
4. Acceptance of prayer, by way of test or trial, is occasional and rare, whereas a reward or grace, is very frequent, and it brings deliverance from difficulties which for others might prove disastrous leading sometimes to suicide. We have daily evidence of this. When people, engrossed in affairs of the world, with little or no connection with God become involved in cares and anxieties, diseases, dilemmas and dangers, end their lives by taking a poison, by jumping into a well, or by their own gun, they do so in despair as they have no strong faith in God. But the favoured ones of God, when they find themselves in such critical situations, receive Divine help in most extraordinary ways. Be-

cause of their strong faith in God, and because of their special relationship with Him. The grace of God comes and sustains them in wonderous ways so much that a person enjoying contact with God is convinced it is God's help which has come to them;

5. Lastly, the favoured ones who enjoy acceptance of Prayer as a sign of election, receive Divine graces and rewards. God becomes their patron and protector in all things. The light of Divine love, serenity born of a sense of security itself born of Divine acceptance, and signs of spiritual delight and bliss are writ large on their faces. We have this described in the Holy Quran thus:

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تعرف فی وجوههم نضرة النعیم (۸۳ : ۲۵)

الا ان اولیاء الله لاخوف علیهم ولاهم یحزنون - الذین آمنواو کانوا یتقون - لهم البشری فی الحیوة الدنیا و فی الاخرة لا تبدیل لکلمت الله ذلك هو الفوز العظیم - (۱۰ : ۶۳ - ۶۵)

ان الذین قالوا ربناالله ثم استقاموا تتنزل علیهم الملئکة الاتخافوا ولاتحزنوا وابشروابالجنةالتی کنتم توعدون- نحن اولیاء کم فی الحیوة الدنیا وفی الاخرة ولکم فیها ما تشتهی انفسکم ولکم فیهاماتدعون (٤١ : ٣١-٣٢)

و اذا سالك عبادی عنی فانی قریب اجیب دعوة الداع اذا دعان فلیستجیبوا لی ولیومنوا بی لعلهم یرشدون (۲ : ۱۸۷)

"Thou wilt find on their faces the freshness of bliss". (83 : 25)

"Those who believe and are God-fearing for them are glad tiding in the present life and the life to come—there is no changing the words of Allah ; that indeed is the supreme triumph". (10 : 63-65)

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"As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, saying : 'Fear not, nor grieve ; and rejoice in glad tidings of the Garden that you were promised. We are your friends in this life and in the life to come. Therein you will have all that your souls desire ; therein you will have all that you ask for". (41 : 31-32)

"And when My servants ask thee about Me, say : 'I am but near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right path.' "* (2 : 187)

In sum, let it be known that being loved, accepted and befriended by God, some signs of which I have mentioned,

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*That is, beware or know it for certain that those who are friends of God the Exalted, those who love God and are loved by God, are distinguished by certain signs. First, they have no fear of what they will eat or what they will wear or how they will get rid of certain calamities; this because they keep receiving assurances of Divine help.

They grieve not over losses, omissions, or mistakes of the past, because they are blessed with patience. Second, they are

can never be possible except through following the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace and the blessings of God. If a Christian or an Arya or a Jew thinks he can match a true

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true believers, i.e., are perfect in faith and are God-fearing i.e., they shun which connotes lack of belief or lack of true submission.

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Their third sign is that they receive glad tidings through revelations, true dreams etc., they have this promise to them for life Here and life Hereafter, and nothing can alter this solemn Divine Promise. This is the coveted position they are blessed with i.e., they are blessed with revelations and true visions granted to the chosen friends of God. And this divine communion is the sign of their nearness to God and friendship with Him.

This, then, is the law of God: that those who turn away from man-made gods and idols, and turn instead to Allah the Most Exalted, and declare that they have only One Lord, and that they look to no other being for help or protection and remain steadfast and unshaken in trial and tribulation, they are to whom angels come down with the message (that is, they receive glad tidings through revelations and visions) that God is their Friend, Protector and Guardian both Here and Hereafter, and that in the Hereafter they will get whatever their hearts will desire. In other words, even if they have un-pleasant things to endure, they need not worry. In the Hereafter all their worries will come to an end and all their desires will be satisfied. One may ask: How can it be that in the Hereafter one will have all that one desires? The answer is that it is essental for salvation, nay, in it lies salvation. Otherwise, if after having achieved salvation, a man is still haunted, his heart still consumed by unfulfilled desires, then what use is to him his salvation? He still suffers a kind of anguish, a pain.

follower of the Holy Prophet in this respect, let him know it will not avail him at all. Here therefore, is a test, a simple

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Important, therefore, it is that the Divine Garden, or Paradise, the Home of salvation or Heaven—or by whatever name you may choose to call it—which is a place of the highest bliss should provide perfect happiness to man. It should be a place without any grief or fear or pain of failure. It is true in Heaven there will be nothing unworthy, nothing unseemly. The pure spirits of Paradise will not even have a desire for such things. These pure and holy minds, freed from satanic thoughts, will have only holy desires, in consonance with the pure nature of man and the Holy Divine Will. So that man may achieve his physical and spiritual perfection, and so that, by a perfect unfolding of all his capacities, he may become as perfect as man can be.

The purpose of paradise is not that we may drop our basic human nature and leave it behind, as it were. This is what our opponents, Christians and Aryas, seem to think. The purpose is that all the external and internal characteristics of human nature may attain perfect development ; that all deviations from the straight path may disappear bringing about in the most appropriate manner the development essential for human perfection in all respects physical and spiritual.

The Quran goes on to say, "When My favoured ones (those who are chosen) ask about Me and cry, Where art Thou', let them know I am very near to them. I hear the cries of all sincere criers. As soon as a sincere servant cries to Me (with his heart or tongue) I hear him and hear at once (which shows I am really near to every one who calls). But he should make himself deserving of My response

test. Let a Christian (or a follower of any other religion) confront a true Muslim, a true follower of the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, saying,

> "I will show all signs similar to signs shown by you, match secrets of the unseen unveiled to you, and help given to you in the form of prayers accepted, all the mighty signs which you show in vindication of your honour or all that happens in fulfilment of divine promises of special favours to you in fulfilment of prophetic warning to your bitter and deadly antagonists. In short, I will show all that is shown through you or by you."

In such a confrontation as already stated only failure awaits the non-Muslim challenger. He will not even dare take the field because he knows in the heart of hearts, that he stands for falsehood, and has no relation with, and enjoys no nearness to, the true God Who helps the truthful and befriends those who are sincere in faith.

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> to his call. That is to say, man himself creates obstacles in the acceptance of his prayer. When he ceases to lead a holy life and turns away from God, God also turns away from him. He should also have firm faith in Me (Because firm faith bless prayer with acceptance). If he calls Me in full faith, he shall have response and success. That is to say, God the Most Exalted shall always be with him, and he shall never be deprived of God's gift and guidance."
> Acceptance of prayers, therefore, is a mighty sign of the beloved ones of God.

And our last words are: all praise belongs to Allah, the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden. He alone is our Master. And the best Master and the best Guide is He.

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